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Claim 1 (previously presented): A system for interconnecting Fibre Channel Arbitrated Loop Devices employing the Fibre Channel Arbitrated Loop protocol including an access fairness algorithm, comprising:

a plurality of Fibre Channel Arbitrated Loop ports each including port logic,

a route determination apparatus,

a connectivity apparatus, and

logic implementing predefined loop control criteria to enforce fairness for single and multiple Loop Switch systems in addition to the access fairness algorithm by assigning different access priorities to the ports in accordance with different port types.

Claim 2 (original): A system for interconnecting Fibre Channel Arbitrated Loop Devices of claim 1, wherein the fairness logic serves to limit the number of times a connected device opens another device.

Claim 3 (original): A system for interconnecting Fibre Channel Arbitrated Loop Devices of claim 2, wherein the fairness logic serves to limit the number of times a connected device sequentially opens another device.

Claim 4 (original): A system for interconnecting Fibre Channel Arbitrated Loop Devices of claim 1, further including a counter to count the number of opens.

Claim 5 (original): A system for interconnecting Fibre channel Arbitrated Loop Devices of claim 4, wherein the counter counts sequential opens.

Claim 6 (original): A system for interconnecting Fibre Channel Arbitrated Loop Devices of claim 1, wherein the logic proactively closes a device.

Claim 7 (canceled)

Claim 8 (original): A system for interconnecting Fibre Channel Arbitrated Loop Devices of claim 1, wherein when a port is granted a connection due to the receipt of an OPN, it is moved to the bottom of the list and the lower priority ports are moved up toward the top of the list.

Claim 9 (previously presented): A system for interconnecting Fibre Channel Arbitrated Loop Devices of claim 1, wherein the different access priorities are predefined.

Claim 10 (previously presented): A system for interconnecting Fibre Channel Arbitrated Loop Devices of claim 9 wherein the different access priorities include a higher level which wins loop arbitration before the lower levels.

Claim 11 (previously presented): A system for interconnecting Fibre Channel Arbitrated Loop Devices of claim 9 wherein the access priorities are separate from the Fibre Channel Arbitrated Loop address priorities.

Claim 12 (original): A system for interconnecting Fibre Channel Arbitrated Loop Devices of claim 1, wherein fairness is enforced in a string cascade architecture.

Claim 13 (original): A system for interconnecting Fibre Channel Arbitrated Loop Devices of claim 12 wherein the fairness is enforced in part where a device wins an arbitration when an ARB has traveled between the switch and the interconnected switches on the string.